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VISITING ON THE SABBATH.

IN no form, perhaps, is the day of the Lord dishonored with so little consciousness of criminality as by MAKING VISITS AND CALLS AMONG NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS. Even professors of religion seem not sufficiently aware of the evil practice; and it is well, if in some places the prevalence of the custom does not blind the eyes of ministers of the Gospel, and deter them from giving the instruction and reproof which so injurious a practice demands. As a dissuasive from such a violation of divine command to "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy," let us urge that visits exert an injurious influence ON YOURSELF AND YOUR OWN FAMILY.

They keep you from *reading the Bible, and the other duties of the closet*. These duties which are indispensable to the maintenance of religion in the soul, and should receive special attention on the Sabbath, can no where be so well performed as at home, where every one has, or ought to have, a place for retirement. Even on a visit to your nearest friends, you will be expected to mingle with the family in which you are, and will hardly be disposed to seek a place of seclusion adapted to the serious performance of private religious duties.

The habit of visiting keeps you from *the house of God and the Sabbath School*. No Sabbath visitor will be found uniformly in his pew at church, or at the head of a class, or scrupulous in the performance of other appropriate duties of the day.

If you are the head of a family, that portion of it which remains at home *is left without your guidance*. The duty to sanctify the Sabbath extends not only to yourself, but to your children and household. Whatever directions to observe the Sabbath you may give on your leaving home, they will be apt to disregard; especially since they see you transgressing the very command you require them to obey. Besides, by your absence you leave your household exposed to the temptation of going themselves from home; visiting, rambling, playing, if not practising grosser forms of violating God's holy day. You leave them, moreover, exposed to the visits, evil example, and pernicious influence of intruders from other families. In short, you will have every reason to fear that in your absence the Sabbath will be shamefully violated by those of your own household, and by "the stranger within thy gates."

Your visits occasion *yourself, your beasts, or domestics*, unnecessary and unlawful labour on the Sabbath day. You are not only to abstain from labour yourself, but you are required to see that your household do the same. "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle." No matter whether the amount of labour is more or less; it is clearly forbidden by the law of God.

This habit is equally injurious to *THE FAMILY YOU VISIT*.

It gives them *additional labor on the Sabbath*. Often the Sabbath is thus made a day of *feasting*.

Whatever may be the wish of the visitors, there will be, even among their nearest friends, more preparation, and of course more secular and sinful labour, for the entertainment, than if the family had been alone.

The family you visit are *also hindered from attending to their proper Sabbath employments*. How can the head of the family find opportunity for instructing his household; how can he or they suitably engage in the reading of the Bible, or private prayer and meditation, when they are encumbered with visitors? No family craves the character of being hospitable; and their members will hardly dare leave the visitors, even to instruct the Sabbath School class, or attend to other appropriate duties of the day.

Too often you also introduce into the family you visit *worldly and unprofitable conversation*. If you do not do this yourself, you tempt them to do it. They will hardly suppose that you have left your own family for the sake of spiritual discourse at the house of another, and will not be likely to intrude such discourse upon you? Do not facts warrant these inferences? Were a man to treat his Sabbath visitors with religious conversation, or with reading the Scriptures, how long would his house be thronged with them? What more effectual, and I may add, what more proper expedient can be adopted by any family to rid themselves of such intruders?

REMARKS.

1. Visits to your relatives, even your parents or children, are for the most part attended with the same evils as visits to others.

2. Visits made by leaving home on *Saturday* and returning on *Monday*, are liable to most of the objections to visits which are begun and ended on the Sabbath. There may be a little less of labor on the Sabbath by the beasts that carry you, but the labor of the family you visit, is increased; they are more or less hindered in their proper Sabbath employments for the whole day; that portion of your family which you leave at home is without a guide in their Sabbath duties, or any one to lead them in family worship; and your seat is vacant in the house of God, where you ought every Sabbath to be seen, for the encouragement of your minister and Christian friends, and as an example to your children and others.

3. Visits or calls on the Sabbath are often made under the *pretence of visiting the sick*. When this is done with the design of giving such relief to the body or spiritual wants of the sick as they will not be likely to obtain without your visit, then you perform an act of mercy, and your visit is not only lawful but commendable. But to visit or to call on the Lord's day merely because there is a sick person in the family, is a most weak apology for the crime of Sabbath breaking. If the family deem it a kindness, it is only because it is customary, and therefore expected, and because the family have inadequate views of the sanctity of the Lord's day. By such visits or calls, the sick, as well as the rest of the family, are really incommoded. The Sabbath is often a *hard day in the house of the sick*, when the friends and neighbours come in throngs, merely or principally because they are unwilling to spare time for that purpose on other days.

4. Visits or calls made on the Sabbath because you